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DEPT ALSO PLEASE PASS TO PEACE CORPS

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [PREL](#) [AM](#) [KMRD](#)

SUBJECT: NEW PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS SWORN IN BY NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR

1. SUMMARY: On August 23, the Ambassador swore in 51 new Peace Corps Volunteers for service in Armenia, the largest group since the program was established in 1992. Foreign Minister Oskanian, who attended the ceremony, spoke passionately about the high value of the program for Armenia and U.S. - Armenia relations. Virtually every media outlet in the country widely and positively covered the ceremony, which included Armenian-language performances from new Volunteers. END SUMMARY.

2. In his first public act since arriving in Armenia on August 21, the Ambassador swore in the 12th group of Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) to serve in Armenia. This new crop of 51 brings the total number of PCVs on active service to 90. The group will serve in all four of Peace Corps Armenia's programs: Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Community Health Education, Community Business Development and Environmental Education. Before administering the oath, the Ambassador thanked the volunteers for their service, congratulated them on completing three months of vigorous in-country orientation and safety training, and charged them with being good U.S. Ambassadors to the various town and villages where they will serve.

3. Attendance at the event was impressive. In addition to FM Oskanian, Minister of Education Sergo Yeritsyan and representatives from the Ministries of Trade and Economic Development, Health Care, and Nature Protection, were present the ceremony.

4. FM Oskanian conveyed a message of appreciation from RA President Robert Kocharian, and expressed particular enthusiasm regarding the program. He said that Armenians had much to learn from PCVs, simply by virtue of their presence, as they give up their own material comforts to serve others and advocate volunteerism as a rewarding experience. He noted that he himself felt like a PCV when he made the decision to leave the U.S. and return to Armenia following its independence.

5. As part of the very public event, PCVs demonstrated the Armenian language skills they had gained during their eleven weeks of training by giving speeches, reciting a well-known Armenian poem and singing a classic Armenian song. Predictably, the volunteers won over the Armenian audience with their display of recognition for the value of Armenian culture.

Press Coverage

6. Virtually every media outlet widely and positively covered the swearing-in ceremony. As this was his first public event, all eyes were focused on the Ambassador.

7. The combination of a warm event attended by high-level GOAM officials, fresh-faced PCVs quoting Armenian poets, and the debut of the new U.S. Ambassador who peppered his speech with Armenian phrases, generated a full 24 hours of extremely positive coverage for Peace Corps and U.S. assistance in Armenia.

EVANS